

he could fill with a company specializing in message management.

Connolly and Company was started with one telephone, two computers, a secretary and one client. Seven years later, it's a thriving public relations firm whose dynamic staff services clients in telecommunications, commercial real estate development, health care and law—among many others.

Connolly and Company is an upstanding business in Texas that helps its many clients put their best foot forward. The firm has collected many awards and is regarded as one of the top firms in San Antonio.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have had this opportunity to celebrate the anniversary of Connolly and Company.

RECOGNIZING ANNIVERSARY OF THE RATIFICATION OF THE 13TH AMENDMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise here today to express my support for H.R. 196 that recognize the 140th anniversary of the thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery in the United States.

I applaud my colleague from Oakland, California, for her hard work on this resolution because of the efforts that have been made to ensure that the Thirteenth Amendment is respected in practice. There were many examples of seemingly deliberate attempts to bypass the 13th Amendment regarding slavery. For example, in Texas in 1867, African-Americans constituted about one third of the convicts in state penitentiaries. However, about 90 percent of those inmates were leased out for cheap railroad labor.

Apprenticeship laws also were embraced with increasing vigor throughout the South. In some States, such as Maryland and North Carolina, courts ordered African American children to be bound for labor to white "employers" without the permission or knowledge of the children's parents. Records compiled by the Freedmen's Bureau in those States indicate a virtual deluge of requests for assistance in obtaining the freedom of children enslaved through "lawful" State-court action. Of course, the State-court actions in these cases were inconsistent with Federal law, and the resulting involuntary servitude of these children was a violation of the Thirteenth Amendment. As founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I assert that it is critical for the future of our children that we preserve the spirit of this Constitutional Amendment, for history has shown that children have been vulnerable in the past.

As members of Congress, we must ensure that this milestone in American history is recognized and celebrated. I am pleased to stand with my colleagues by being an original cosponsor of this legislation.

HONORING IRENE ALEXANDER

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize one of Chicago's treasures, Mrs. Irene Alexander.

Today Mrs. Alexander will perform a concert of Chopin and Gershwin pieces for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Following that, she will visit Walter Reed Hospital to perform for wounded soldiers. Her final performance of the day will be for Navy veterans at a concert in Bethesda, Maryland. While this schedule would be too much strain for most, it is the norm for Mrs. Alexander, who is 85 years old.

When she is back home in Chicago, Mrs. Alexander shares her musical gifts at nursing homes throughout the city, performing approximately 150 concerts each year. An accomplished pianist, she has played at Chicago's Orchestra Hall and at venues in Israel and China.

Mrs. Alexander has overcome several personal hardships in order to serve others. As a child, she overcame polio, and as an adult she battled breast cancer. For the past 15 years, she has suffered from macro-degeneration of the eyes, and is legally blind today. Through it all she has continued to perform and serve as a source of inspiration for many.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in recognition of Chicago's most generous and talented citizens, Mrs. Irene Alexander.

IN RECOGNITION AND REMEMBRANCE OF THE LIFE OF U.S. MARINE CORPS MASTER SERGEANT BRETT ANGUS

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to recognize and honor the life of U.S. Marine Corps Master Sergeant Brett Evan Angus.

Minnesota and St. Paul have lost another courageous serviceman. U.S. Marine Corps Master Sergeant Brett E. Angus served his Nation, his community and his family with honor in one of the military's most dangerous jobs, as an ordnance disposal expert. Master Sergeant Angus was serving his second tour in Operation Iraqi Freedom when, on November 26, 2005, an improvised explosive device detonated while he was conducting combat operations near Camp Taqaddum, Iraq. He was assigned to Marine Wing Support Squadron-372, Marine Wing Support Group-37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, out of Camp Pendleton, California. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, his unit was attached to 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward).

Master Sergeant Angus was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. His family history of military service dates back to the Civil War, and he followed his father, uncle and grandfather into military service. He was an outstanding professional soldier who loved being a Marine and earned several awards and medals for his

service. He was eligible for retirement this year, but chose to return to Iraq for a second tour of duty. As an ordnance disposal expert, his family was constantly afraid of the danger his job put him in, but knew that his vital work was saving the lives of U.S. Armed Forces and the Iraqi people. His vast knowledge and expertise made him a valuable teacher for his fellow Marines.

I extend my condolences and share in the grief of his family and friends. Master Sergeant Angus' made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our Nation, and we will be forever grateful. The sympathies of all Americans go to his wife, Masami, his father, Russell, and to his family and friends.

Master Sergeant Brett Angus is the 26th service member from Minnesota to die in Iraq since 2003. I honor Brett Angus for his courageous service to this country, and his commitment to protecting our freedom.

TRIBUTE TO THUNDER RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY TEAM

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to applaud the accomplishments of a group of Highlands Ranch, Colorado student-athletes. The Varsity Football team from Thunder Ridge High School—Tyler Ames, William Ard, Cody Barday, Jesse Bartholomew, Damjan Bates, Dylan Baumgarten, Brian Behnke, Shay Belfiore, Kyle Black, Sean Brandon, Lucas Braun, James Breidel, Shawn Brevig, John Callahan, Evan Carter, Chris Carpenter, Hunter Caulder, Josh Ceccarelli, Bryce Clark, Robert Clark, Phillip Clukies, Mike Coffey, Chris Collins, Richie Cooper, Evan Crabtree, Carlos Cristaldo, Justin Curnow, Scott Day, Matt England, Ben Faddis, Paden Faulkner, Matt Flood, Brennan Fox, Brendan Gallagher, Desi Gallegos, Cody Gibbs, Caleb Golter, Russ Gorham, Alex' Guesnier, Corey Hankins, Zach Hansen, Clay Harrison, Chris Hernley, Michael' Hoffman, Cory Hofstetter, Ryan Huber, Matt Hutton, Ryan Jellum, Nick Kochan, Jordan LeMarinel, Brian Lawrence, Bryce Lines, Nick Lind, Benny Lopez, Nate McCarroll, Matt Maichele, Kyle Manhart, Cody Martin, Jordan Meek, Drew Miguel, Eric Moats, Brendan Nelson, Tyler Nelson, Brandon Nelson, Doug Nisenson, Alex Nittoli, Will Palamet, Tim Papik, Shane Pickrell, Brent Pokryfke, Chris Ray, Josh Roach, LeRoy Santos, Steven Savage, Alex Sawyer, Josh Schaner, Patrick Sharshel, Cory Sicard, Ethan Sizer, Ben Smith, Parker Smith, Travis Somma, Tyler Spieker, Andrew Tapp, J.T. , Taylor, Bret Techentien, Zach Tiedgen, Brandon Townsley, James Tucker, Andrew Ulmer, Danny Vail, Tyler VanderVegt, Jeff Watt, Riley Williamson, Derrick Youhas, Eric Zane, Chuck Zimmerman and their coaches, Joe Johnson, Joe White, Ryan Hollingshead, Jon Ackerman, Mick Ward, Marty Moon, Kent Milius, Matt Chapman, Steve Miller, John Reyes, Joe Wegner, Nick Grimm, Craig Kyllonen—won the Colorado State Division 4A Football Championship on December 3, 2005.

After their undefeated season, the Grizzlies gained the second place seeding in the State

playoff bracket. They won the next four games and this outstanding group of athletes earned the right to be called State Champions.

The Grizzlies have trained intensively while maintaining a standard of academic excellence throughout the season. It is my pleasure to honor their championship, and to wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE RONALD H. TILLS

HON. THOMAS M. REYNOLDS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honor a respected jurist, a dedicated public servant, a valued mentor and a trusted friend upon the occasion of his retirement from the New York State Court of Claims.

A native of Hamburg, New York, and a veteran of the United States Army Reserves, Judge Ronald H. Tills began a career in public service that spanned five decades when he joined the Zoning Board of Appeals in 1960. An Assistant Town Attorney and Town Justice, Ron Tills was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1968, where he served his community and his State with distinction, becoming Chairman of the Assembly's Select Committee for Revision of Corporation Law.

It was in his capacity as Member of the State Assembly that Judge Ron Tills took a chance on a young college student with little political experience to help run his re-election campaign in 1972. Joining his Assembly staff following that election, my own career in government and public service was launched, and I will be forever grateful for Ron's guidance, counsel and friendship.

Judge Tills' service to his community culminated when he was nominated by Governor George E. Pataki, and confirmed by the New York State Senate, to the New York State Court of Claims in July of 1995, where he has served as a Court of Claim Judge and Acting Supreme Court Justice for the past decade.

Mr. Speaker, Ron Tills involvement in a variety of civic and community organizations, and the awards and recognitions he has received over the years are too numerous to list. Whether it was the Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Hamburg Volunteer Fire Company, or so many others, Ron Tills involved himself as he did in each endeavor throughout his life and career, with passion, leadership, and commitment.

One of his great loves is the largest and oldest fraternal organization in the world. As a Mason, Ron Tills has held numerous responsibilities within the Masons and the organizations within it, including Proctor of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, Potentate of the Ismalia Shrine Temple, Director and President of the Shrine Oasis and Director of the Buffalo Court 22 of Jesters.

In addition to the Masons, gardening and travel, Ron Tills' greatest love of all is the former Elizabeth Clarkson. Ron and Betty were married on May 6, 1960, and are parents of Thomas and Suzanne and grandparents of Dale Jr. and Diane Goodridge, and Timothy and Abigail Tills.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of and in gratitude for his service, leadership and patriotism,

I ask that this Honorable Body join me in honoring Judge Ronald H. Tills upon the occasion of his retirement, and wish him great health and happiness in the days and years ahead.

RECOGNIZING THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION'S COLORADO DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE LEADERSHIP OF DISTRICT DIRECTOR PATRICIA BARELA RIVERA

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and congratulate the U.S. Small Business Administration's Colorado District Office, under the leadership of District Director Patricia Barela Rivera, for directing a record \$520 million into Colorado's economy through its lending programs during 2005. The SBA approved 2,255 loan guarantees, a 20 percent increase over 2004, which is the highest number of loans ever approved in Colorado. This critical investment will help strengthen Colorado's economy and create jobs.

Many women and minority-owned businesses are the beneficiaries of these SBA loans. Of the total number of loans, 1,010 worth \$214.6 million went to women and minority firms, and 188 loans worth \$38.7 million went to small businesses owned and operated by veterans. Access to capital is critical in starting and maintaining a business and these loans will ensure that women, minorities and veterans will be part of a robust economy and they will be able to live the American dream.

In addition, I am also pleased at the level of outreach that the Colorado District Office has done in rural Colorado. A large portion of the loans distributed in 2005 went to small businesses in rural areas, which oftentimes are left out during good times and hurt even more when the economy takes a downturn. Every area of the state should be able to share in the success of our economy, and through the tireless efforts of the Colorado District Office staff many rural areas in the State are not being forgotten.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the steadfast leadership of SBA District Director Patricia Barela Rivera. Patricia understands that small businesses are the backbone of America's economy. She is one of the most talented public servants in Colorado who is always striving for excellence, always coming to the aid of those individuals in need, and always working to make our State a better place to live, work, and play. The SBA is lucky to have Patricia as its ambassador in Colorado. I salute her for her unswerving dedication and I know she and her staff will continue to make all of us proud.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3010, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 3010, the FY 2006 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill. I voted against this bill when it passed the House and the conference report before us today is even more objectionable.

The Republican leadership has proposed severe cuts to services that keep our families and communities strong. At a time when consumers are expecting to pay nearly 30 percent more for home heating, the majority has refused to include an increase for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which helps to keep our seniors and children safe during the winter.

This bill also shortchanges important health care programs. Although slightly better than the House-passed bill, this proposal cuts health professions programs by 69 percent at a time when we are struggling to provide health care access in many areas of this country. It also cuts funding for the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant and forces a 24 percent cut to block grants for State health departments. Most striking, while we ask our local public health departments to do more to prepare for a possible pandemic, this bill instead imposes an 11 percent cut on local health departments.

The conference report also cuts overall funding for the Department of Education for the first time in over 10 years. It cuts and guts programs from early childhood education through college. Our Nation's public schools will see budget cuts totaling more than \$784 million, despite the promise to fully fund No Child Left Behind at the time of its enactment in 2002. Since then, NCLB has been underfunded by more than \$39 billion. Our public schools and our students deserve better. This bill underfunds critical programs for the most vulnerable students, providing \$217 million less for Title I Education for Disadvantaged Children program than in fiscal year 2005. In addition, Safe and Drug Free Schools will receive a cut of \$87 million—a decrease of 20 percent. Several other education programs and services will see their budgets frozen, despite increased program costs, greater needs, and inflation.

Pell grants for low-income college students are frozen for the fourth straight year in a row, despite promises by the administration to increase the maximum Pell grant award. While Congress underfunds student financial aid, students and families continue to struggle to pay for a college education that is increasing faster than the rate of inflation.

Investments in health and education are important to our families, our communities, and our country. This conference report does not reflect the values of Minnesotans or Americans. I will vote to reject this conference report and urge my colleagues to do the same.